

# IELTS Writing: General Task 1 Letter samples, phrases and tips.

<https://www.ieltspodcast.com/general-task-1-sample-essays/>

## Sample letters to make a complaint

### A formal complaint

You have eaten at a restaurant and it was such a terrible experience that you have decided to inform the manager by letter of what happened, and that you want your money back. Things to include:

- Facts. You need to be concise but explain what happened.
- Polite. No one responds to insults.
- Outline what you wish from this. What do you want to happen?
- Firmness. You want to be taken seriously.

To the manager,

I would like to express my regret at having dined at your establishment last night; please allow me to explain.

The table was booked two months in advance since it was to cater a major professional event, and yet we were informed by the maitre d' upon arrival that there were no tables sufficiently large and we would have to dine separately. I did press this point with your staff as it was imperative that my party remain in each other's company, but we were told that it was simply impossible to seat us all together.

In addition to this, several menu items were unavailable on the night, including every vegetarian option, meaning that three members of my party were left to eat only bread

throughout the meal. As a result of these incidents, I had intended not to pay, but your staff informed us that they would call the police if we refused, and so to avoid further embarrassment, I complied.

This experience was entirely unacceptable, and I would like to request a full refund of the amount paid. I would also suggest that your staff not promise customers degrees of service that they are unable to provide in order to avoid disappointing experiences such as these.

Regards,  
Paul Hollywood

Your next door neighbour owns a small dog that barks throughout the day and the night. Write a letter to your neighbour requesting that something be done about the dog. Include in your letter:

- Your reason for writing
- What you would like to happen
- A nice, respectful style

Dear Sir and Madame,

I am a nearby resident currently attending university. I am pursuing a degree in mathematics, and my course material is very difficult to understand. I have to spend many hours studying for exams and working through practice problems. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing barking from the dog in your house, it is very difficult for me to concentrate. I am writing to ask if there is anything you can do to help reduce the barking, especially during the later hours. It is difficult for me to sleep because of the barking. I hope that this letter does not offend you, as I am only trying to get myself some comfort at home to aid me in my studies. If you would like to further discuss this, please contact me at your convenience. I hope we can resolve this smoothly. Thank you and take care.

Sincerely,  
Jimmy Lisbon

You ordered an item from an online store and it has arrived damaged.

Write a letter to the retailer to complain. In the letter:

- Explain why you are unhappy
- Request a refund
- Make arrangements to return the damaged item

Dear Sir or Madam,

I recently ordered a Kitchenmax blender from your online shop, and was disappointed to discover that the glass portions of the appliance had been smashed during transit.

I would have expected the package to be wrapped more effectively in order to avoid incidents such as this, but there was almost no padding material in the box. I would like you to arrange for the return of the item and to process a full refund as soon as is convenient, since the blender was intended to be a gift for an occasion that has already passed.

The order number was KX3564686, and it was delivered on 24/09/2017.

If you need to book a time for a courier to collect the parcel, you can contact me at this email address, but it must be within the next two weeks as I will be moving to Washington.

Kind regards,  
Angela Bradford

Your internet connection has been slow and intermittent.

Write a letter to your internet service provider to complain. In the letter:

- Describe the problem and why you are unhappy
- Arrange for an engineer to visit your home
- Request a reduction in your bill

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have been a satisfied customer of yours for over a year, but recently my connection has become intermittent. Even when it is working, it is so slow that it is unusable.

I have actually informed your customer service department of this via phone on two separate occasions, and the problem has now been ongoing for around ten weeks. I would like to request that an engineer be sent to my property since all attempts to resolve the issue remotely have failed. If you could contact me at this email address to arrange a suitable time, that would be great.

Furthermore, since I have not received the advertised service for two-and-a-half months, I do not believe I should be charged for this period. The amount equates to £98.49; I will accept either a payment or a reduction in the total of future bills.

I hope we can resolve this situation promptly.

Regards,  
Robert Smith

## Useful phrases to make an complaint

I am not happy about

I want you to know that

I'm writing to express my dissatisfaction with

I'm writing to express my annoyance with I'm writing to express my annoyance with

I am very much unhappy with I am very much unhappy with

I must complain about

I feel something should be done about I feel something should be done about

I am writing to you to complain

# Sample letters to make an application

## A job application Cover letter

You are applying for a job. As well as attaching a CV, you need to write a cover letter explaining your reasons for choosing this particular job at this particular company, and why you would be a good hire.

Things to include are:

- Possible qualifications or reasons for you to be hired
- Your energy and enthusiasm for the job
- Your past experience in a similar position.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Lead Software Engineer that was advertised in The Times newspaper on 24/09/2017.

My education consists of a Bachelor's Degree with first class honours in Computer Science from the University of Manchester, as well as a Master's Degree in Applied Software Engineering from the University of Barcelona, where I assisted in the development of an artificial intelligence that has the ability to recognise individual personality traits in humans with great accuracy.

Further to this, I have since worked for Intel Corporation as a Senior Engineer for over eight years. My main responsibilities centred around the management of a team of fifteen developers whose job it was to provide machine code solutions to processing problems. I believe it is this well-developed problem solving ability which makes me a suitable candidate for a leadership position at your esteemed company.

Finally, I have been compelled to participate in the technology sector since I was a teenager, and so my enthusiasm for the industry is considerable.

Please find my CV attached for your perusal, and I look forward to discussing this opportunity further at interview.

Yours faithfully,  
Nicola Sturgeon

The school library is seeking applicants for a job over summer break. Write a letter to the library's manager, in your letter include:

- A brief introduction of yourself
- Your experience and relevant skills
- Why you want the job

Dear Sir or Madame,

My name is Jonathan Riley and I am a 3rd year student. I am studying Biology and plan on going to graduate school after I graduate. I am writing to express my interest in the open job position at the school library. I saw the advertisement posted on the job board in the career centre.

While I was in high school, I worked as a volunteer at my local library. I helped the other librarians with checking out books, returning books to the shelves, and answering the telephones. I spent a year as a volunteer there.

I noticed that the position is part time, which would be great because I still need some time to study. I have some relevant experience and I'm a person dedicated to doing a good job. I am available at your convenience and can be reached by phone or by email.

Sincerely,  
Jonathan Riley

You would like to join the local orchestra.

Write a letter of application to the orchestra. In the letter:

- Introduce yourself and your instrument of choice
- Explain how your credentials make you a good candidate
- Express your enthusiasm for music

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in response to the advert placed in The Times regarding the various available positions in the Urmston Festival Orchestra. My name is Peter Bedfellows, I am a pianist, and I've been a resident of Urmston for over four years.

I was most recently involved with the Barcelona symphony orchestra, with which I performed on a regular basis for over nine years. Although I lack formal training, I have been practising piano for almost two decades, and have recently mastered such pieces as Prokofiev's third sonata. I would be happy to perform for a judge or panel whenever is convenient for you.

My wife and I left Barcelona to be closer to her family, who sadly refuse to leave Urmston, but I must continue with my music career; it has been my only passion since I was seven years old.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further in person.

Yours faithfully,  
Jenny Thompson

Your children go to a local school that requires volunteers to accompany school science trips.

Write a letter to the school to apply to be a volunteer. In the letter:

- Introduce yourself and give details of your children who attend the school
- Explain why you are interested in the position
- Talk about any relevant experience that you have with children

Dear Sir or Madam,

My daughter attends your school, and has recently informed me that you are looking for long-term volunteers to attend school trips. I am the mother of Saffron Monsoon; she is in fourth year, in Mrs Bonham-Carter's class.

I thought that since I have such a long relationship with the school I would put myself forward. I think I might be better prepared than most as I was a primary school teacher for over four years before having my daughter and leaving my career.

I work from home the vast majority of the time and so I am looking for opportunities to participate in community events to make sure that I interact with other people, and I couldn't help but think that I'd be a perfect fit for your science trips.

Do give me a call if there are any places still available.

Yours truly,  
Barbara Townshend

## Useful phrases to make an application

I am writing in relation to the advertised position of...

Please find my CV attached...

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me...

I am available between the hours of 2pm and 4pm Monday – Thursday.

I am writing to apply for the position of...

My responsibilities included....

My most recent job was...

I believe I have all the relevant experience required...



# Sample letters to invite

Your friends recently moved to a new city. You will also be moving to the same city. Write a letter to your friends and include:

- Ask where to find a place to live
- Tell them what type of place you're looking for
- Share some fun things you would like to do when you get there

Hi friends!

As you all know by now, I'll soon be moving to Los Angeles with the rest of you. The problem is, I'm not sure yet where I should live or what to do after I get there. I would like to find a place that is relatively inexpensive, but also in a safe area. It would be great if it is just a one bedroom that is also close to a laundry facility. I don't mind if it is a bit far from the university, but I would prefer it to be within walking distance to good restaurants and the beach, if possible. Can anyone help?

Have any of you learned how to surf yet? I've been watching tutorial videos and I think it would be really fun to try and learn. Please let me know if any of you can help me with my request, thank you.

Sincerely,  
Beth

You will be graduating from university and would like to invite your family to the ceremony. Write a letter of invitation to your parents. In the letter:

- Explain that you have completed your studies
- Give details of the event, including time, date and dress code
- Let them know how many tickets they have and who they are for

Dear Mum and Dad,

I received the results from the last exams today, I passed my final year and I'll be graduating in a couple of months. They only gave us a maximum of five tickets per family, so I thought I'd write to you first to let you know the details and who to invite.

Obviously, I want you two there, and bring my sister, too. I thought we could give the other two seats to Grandma and Grandad (the one's on Mum's side; sorry, Dad). I did try to get extra tickets but there is a limited number of seats that can fit in the room.

The ceremony will be held in the main hall of Manchester university on the 4th January 2018. The thing starts at 4pm but you have to be there for 12.30pm for photos and queueing. Also, everyone has to be dressed formal; it's a black tie event.

Let me know if anyone can't make it.

Yours,  
Jimbo

You have won a holiday to Hawaii with one extra ticket.

Write a letter to someone to invite them along with you. In the letter:

- Explain what has happened and that you would like them to come
- Give details of when the trip will take place
- Inform the person of the things they will need for the trip

Dear Nicola,

You will never guess what has happened so I'll just tell you; I've won a trip to Hawaii, and it's for two people. I've decided to take you.

I entered a stupid competition in some magazine and completely forgot about it, and today I received a phone call to let me know that the holiday for two was mine. Of course, you were the first person to come to mind.

I simply won't take no for an answer, so make sure that you have the 15th to the 25th of March 2018 free. Book it off work now to make sure that it's allowed, and send me your passport information so I can register our names on the tickets.

I reckon we will need to go on a brief shopping trip when you get back from Brussels so that we are fully prepared for the beaches and our quiet hillside cabin.

Email me as soon as you can!

Your mate,  
Malcolm

## Useful phrases to invite or reply to an invite

I am writing you in response to your invitation

With the reference of your proposal

Please do let me know if you can make it

Thank you for your kind invite however,  
unfortunately

I am writing to reply to your kind invitation regarding  
the

Do let me know if you can make it

It would be delightful to have you here

Please RSVP as soon as possible

# Sample letters to advise

Write a letter to your favourite restaurant. Include the following:

- Your reason for writing
- What you like about the restaurant
- Suggestions for improvement

Dear Mr. Robertson,

I recently ate at your restaurant, 'Famously Grilled,' and I would just like to write to express my gratitude for operating such a great establishment. I have eaten at your restaurant many times and every meal I have had there has been truly delicious. I have tried many of your entrees, but my absolute favourite is the chicken parmigiana, please don't ever change the recipe, it is incredible.

I love the decorations that you have inside your restaurant and I think the service is excellent. You do a great job of choosing people to run your restaurant.

I have one request- I am planning on throwing a surprise birthday for my wife and I'm wondering if it is possible to hold the party at your restaurant. Please let me know either by email or phone as to whether or not we can make this happen.

Sincerely,  
Samuel Potts

Write a letter to the newspaper editor about an experience you had at a restaurant. The experience can be good or bad. Describe your experience in detail and state whether or not you recommend others to visit the restaurant.

To the Editor,

I recently had a dining experience at a local restaurant called “The Twisted Fiddle,” that I must write in to tell you about. This was the worst dining experience I have ever had. Upon entering, it took 10 minutes before a host noticed me and took me to a table. After seating, I had to wait another 10 minutes for my drink order to be taking. The waitress was very rude. I looked through the menu and decided on something I didn’t think would be bad.

Unfortunately, after waiting another 20 minutes for my food, it turned out to be poorly cooked and seasoned. I asked to see the manager and the waitress once more gave me an attitude. I spoke with the manager but was not pleased with the conversation. Please print this letter so that others can avoid such a poor dining experience.

Thank you,  
Unhappy Customer

A friend is considering buying a house nearby, but you have decided to leave the area due to a rise in crime.

Write a letter to your friend advising them not to move into the neighbourhood. In your letter:

- Recommend that your friend not go ahead with the purchase
- Give the reasons behind your decision to leave
- Suggest possible alternative areas that you know

Dear Margaret,

Gerald told me recently that you have put in an offer on a house on Paxman Muse, just around the corner from me, and I thought I’d let you know a couple of things.

We've been experiencing problems associated with a noticeable rise in crime in the area, particularly car theft and burglary. This has been happening to us and our neighbours for over a year now, and my wife and I have been desperate to leave the area. We have chosen to rent a house somewhere nicer, and I thought I'd advise you to do the same.

The current property prices do not reflect the changes that have occurred in the area over the last twelve months, and I fear that you would be making a bad investment. We were considering a place in nearby Dimbleby; it's quite small, but that means that high crime is unlikely.

Wherever you decide to live, I just wanted you to know that I would advise against moving here, as I think you deserve something better.

Your friend,  
Edna

**Advise** is a verb meaning "to give counsel to; offer an opinion or suggestion as worth following." **Advice** is a noun meaning "an opinion or recommendation offered as a guide to action, conduct, etc."



[Advice vs. Advise - Everything After Z by Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com/e/advice-vs-advise/)  
[www.dictionary.com/e/advice-vs-advise/](https://www.dictionary.com/e/advice-vs-advise/)

## Useful phrases to advise

I am happy to advise you that

It would/might be a good idea to

I honestly believe it would be better to

In my honest opinion I would

I strongly advise you to/not to

The best thing for you to do is

Please do consider my advice because

I would strongly suggest you consider

# Sample letters to apologise

## A Formal Apology and Explanation

You have received a letter from your university of Albion demanding a reason for your absence from an exam. You were ill that day, but failed to submit the evidence. Write a letter to the Examinations Committee explaining your situation. You should include:

- Apologies for the situation
- Identification for yourself (Name, Student Number, Case Number)
- An explanation of what had happened and any possible evidence you may have
- Possible resolutions to consider.

To the University of Albion examinations committee,

I am writing in response to your letter regarding my unauthorised absence from the mathematics examination held on the 24th September, case number M2342.

My name is Deborah Meaden (student number A345), and I would first like to sincerely apologise for failing to properly notify the university of my inability to attend the examination last Tuesday.

Unfortunately, I awoke in hospital on the morning of the examination, and was informed that I had been found unconscious, lying on the pavement by the bus stop. A member of the public had called an ambulance and I was admitted to the local general hospital, where I regained consciousness several hours later. As I was required to remain in hospital for several days, I was



unable to make contact with the university, but I have included my medical certificates as evidence for my claim.

To rectify this issue, I would like to request that the committee permit me to take the examination on another date, or to substitute the grade for an average taken from my previous work, lest I fail the entire module.

My apologies once again, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,  
Deborah Meaden

You agreed to take a particular job over the summer, but due to unforeseen circumstances, you can no longer take the position. Write a letter including:

– Explaining your situation

– An apology

– Express that you would be interested in the position next summer

Dear Mrs. Johnston,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing in regard to the lab technician position that I interviewed for last week. I know that I accepted the position after it was offered to me; however, unfortunately, I will not be able to fulfil this agreement. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I will no longer have the time available that I would need in order to satisfy the required hours for the position. I sincerely apologize for no longer being able to take on this position, not only for inconveniencing you, but also because I really wanted to gain valuable experience working in the laboratory.

If you can accept my apology and if there is still an available position sometime in the near future, I would very much like to take on a position in the laboratory, even if unpaid.

Thank you and take care,  
Serena Chung

You recently applied for 2 separate jobs. Both have chosen to hire you, but you must write a letter to 1 of them explaining why you are unable to take the position. Include in your letter:

– An apology

– An explanation of your situation

Dear Mrs. LaFayette,

I recently received a job offer for the position of administrative assistant. However, I have also received a job offer for another position that is much closer to my home. While your offer would be a great fit for me, the commute when compared to my other offer is less than ideal. After considering my options, I must inform you that I will not be able to accept the position. I hope that this doesn't inconvenience you and I apologize if I have wasted any of your time. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work for you, but I must also consider what is best for me in this case.

If the other position doesn't work out so well, and the position you've offered is still available, maybe we can then make it work. Thank you again for the opportunity, I really appreciate it.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Walters

You have not seen a close friend for a very long time. You also still have a few of your friend's belongings that were left at your house the last time she visited. In your letter include:

- Why you are writing
- What you've been doing since you last spoke together
- Apologize for still having the items and ask how you can return them

Dear Jo,

I'm sorry that we haven't talked in a long time. I hope everything is going well with you. I have been pretty busy with my schedule lately, but I often remember all the fun things we did together. Last summer was fantastic. I was cleaning out my closet last weekend and I found a few of your shirts and books. Hopefully you aren't mad about not having them, but if you would like me to return them to you please let me know what would be best for you. It would also be great if we could try and meet up sometime in the near future. I miss you more than I would like to.

I've been doing ok, aside from being so busy. Aside from that there isn't much new with me. What is new with you, are you still practicing violin? Let's chat soon.

Your friend,  
Sally

## Useful phrases to apologise

I regret to inform you

I am writing to apologise

It is with my deepest regret that

I would like to apologise

I sincerely apologise for

I do apologise for any inconvenience caused

I hope that this does not cause you any problems

I would strongly suggest you consider

# Sample letters to make a request

A new neighbour has moved in next door and has taken your main rubbish bin.

Write a letter to your new neighbour requesting that they return the item. In the letter:

- Explain that new bins must be sourced from the local council
- Request that the person returns your bin immediately
- Inform the person of what further actions you will take should they not return your bin

Dear new neighbour,

First of all, welcome to the neighbourhood.

I live at number 10, next door to you, and I'm writing to you because I saw you take my bin into your garden on the day you moved in. I'm sure you were convinced that it must have been yours, but I had simply left it outside for collection. If your bin is missing, you should call the council and have them deliver a new one.

I cannot, however, live without a bin. I already have a bag in my kitchen waiting to be taken out, and so I'm forced to request that you return my bin immediately. Feel free to leave any rubbish it already contains, but if you don't return the bin within 48 hours, I will feel it necessary to involve the council.

I hope we can resolve this conflict as quickly as possible, as I'm sure we'd make great neighbours otherwise.

Your new neighbour,  
Frederick Nickelson

You would like to be work in a different city to be closer to your family.

Write a letter to your employer to request a transfer to another office. In the letter:

- Explain why you would like to move
- Request that your employer place you in a specific city
- Request that it be completed by a certain date

Dear Management,

My name is Peter Mandelson and I have been a loyal employee of HMG Inc. for over twelve years. Currently, I am a floor manager working in the Urmston branch.

It has recently come to my attention that my wife's father now requires full time care, and I would like to request that I be transferred to a different office so that we may be more involved.

I am aware that the company operates an office and factory in Devon, and working here would mean being close enough to my father-in-law. If my exact role is not available at the Devon site, I am willing to interview for other relevant jobs and consider them on a case-by-case basis.

Unfortunately, this is a time sensitive issue, and so I would like to further request that I receive confirmation of the transfer within the next 30 days, or I may have to consider leaving the company entirely.

Yours faithfully,  
Jeremy Paulson

You live near a record shop that sells music, movies, and books.

Write a letter to the shop asking if they have a few different items that you are looking for.

- Ask what the prices are and if they can be orders
- Ask when they would arrive and if you can have them held in advance.

Dear Sir or Madame,

My name is Jennifer and I am a student living near your store. I prefer supporting local businesses, which is why I am writing you this letter. There are some rare music albums and

movies that I am interested in purchasing and I am wondering if I can ask you to order them to your shop so that I can buy them from you. The first is a music album entitled “The Sounds of Mysteries,” by the artist JJJ. The second item is a movie called, “When the Wind Knows,” directed by Sammy Stillpen. If it is possible for you to order these for me, I would be greatly appreciative. It would also be great if you could tell me what the total cost would be and when I could pick these items up. You can reach me by phone or email at your convenience.

Thank you,  
Jennifer Nash

## Useful phrases to make a request

Could you please / possibly

Please would you consider

Would it be possible to

Would you be kind enough to

Is there any way you could ... ?

I would strongly suggest you consider

(informal) Can you ..?

(informal) Will you ..?

## Informal letter samples

[Your sibling has sent you a letter asking for an update on your life.](#)

[Write a letter to your sibling. In your letter:](#)

[– Describe what you did for your last birthday](#)

[– Ask for photos of your sibling’s last holiday](#)

– Talk about something you are looking forward to

Dear Sis,

Thanks for your last letter; it gave me a giggle on a boring Wednesday.

As for me, I was out for my birthday last week; seven of us went to see a play at the Royal Exchange Theatre, and we stayed out late at a cocktail bar. The play was good, the drinks were many, and I had to take the next day off work with the world's biggest hangover. I swear they get worse every year.

I'll be going to Spain for a couple of weeks next month, though, that'll be good. That reminds me, send me those photos from your last holiday, that one to Croatia, when you went to all those music festivals – that sounded like the best time when you told me about it.

I'm looking forward to going to a festival or two, myself, and I want to get a good idea of what the different ones are like. If you want to go with me next year, give me a shout ASAP.

Love love love,

Em

Your best friend is moving back to your city after being overseas for five years.

Write a letter to convince your friend to move in with you. In the letter:

– Explain how much you have missed your friend

– Describe how you feel about your friend's return

– Give reasons that you and your friend should share a home

BECKY!

I just heard that you're coming back to Manchester in the spring; is this really true?!

I've missed you soooooo much, you wouldn't believe! Although I've also heard that you are planning to get your own place in Stretford, and this makes me less excited. I have been living

on my own for six months now, and I can't wait to get back into a house share or something. Living alone is just not for me, and I always thought that the days we lived together were the best.

That's why I'd like to propose that we start looking for a flat for the two of us. It would be cheaper than us both living apart, and we both have great jobs so we can afford a really big place with both of us there. Imagine a city centre apartment in a converted mill, three double bedrooms, massive living room!

You know you want to!

Your forever mate,

Dave

[Write a letter to a pen pal. This can be your first letter or a letter you're writing after knowing your pen pal for a long time. Include details you would normally include when writing to a pen pal in this situation.](#)

Dear Madison,

I am so grateful that I finally found someone I can write to on a regular basis! Thank you for agreeing to be my pen pal, I appreciate it very much. I know that we both already have an idea about each other, but I'd like to tell you a bit more about myself.

I really enjoy reading books and try to read at least 2 a week. Sometimes it is hard to keep up with this schedule, especially while going to university and working at the coffee shop, but I try my best. I also really like movies and will sometimes watch a movie from a book after I have read the book just to see if they're different and to see which I like more. Usually the book is better.

Please write and tell me more about yourself, I'd love to hear.

Talk with you soon!

Jasmine



## Useful phrases for informal letters

Hello/Hi NAME / Hi there

I was wondering if you could help me.

I'm sorry to tell you that

I should let you know that

I hope you're well

It's been ages since I've heard from you

Lots of love

Thanks very much